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(1) Editorial: We expect new U.S. ambassador to help resolve abduction issue

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
May 31, 2009

U.S. President Barack Obama has appointed California business lawyer John Roos, 54, as the next ambassador to Japan.

Roos lacks a high profile in Japan-U.S. relations and his name is practically unknown in Japan, but he is said to be a person "who can directly talk to the President." The Japan-U.S. alliance is fraught with a host of issues. We hope that Mr. Roos will make use of his close ties with Obama to resolve such problems and further develop the bilateral relationship.

Most of the U.S. ambassadors to Japan in the postwar period came from the academic, diplomatic, or political worlds, and they were all knowledgeable about Japan. This trend was broken with the appointment by the previous president, George Bush, of Thomas Schieffer, who was his friend and was not a Japan specialist.

It was said that Schieffer "can even call Bush in his bedroom." In selecting someone for the ambassadorship in Japan, then President Bush gave priority to close ties over the factor of knowledge about Japanese and U.S. politics. That is why the U.S. State Department calls the nomination of Roos "a Schieffer type."

When he first took up the post of ambassador, Schieffer was critical of then Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine,

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expressing concern about relations between Japan and China becoming strained under the Koizumi government.

On the other hand, Schieffer expressed his keen interest in the issue of past abductions by North Korea of Japanese nationals from a humanitarian point of view and deep sympathy for the families of the abduction victims.

Schieffer visited the site at which Megumi Yokota had been kidnapped. He was the first ambassador to visit an abduction site. He also helped arrange the meeting between President Bush and family members of abductees, including the mother of Megumi. He had the belief that contact with the people is essential.

Regarding the U.S. decision to take North Korea off its terror blacklist, it is well known that Schieffer strongly urged President Bush to reconsider the decision by sending a personal letter to him although he failed to persuade the U.S. government to change its mind.

Roos won President Obama's personal confidence through his contribution to raising funds for the presidential bid. The appointment is indisputably a reward for such contributions. He has never served as an ambassador and has had few personnel ties with politicians. This point will undoubtedly be a cause of some concern. A comparison is likely to be made between Roos and Jon Huntsman, who has been designated as ambassador to China and has plenty of experience in political and diplomatic events.

Even so, if Roos has a willingness to share an awareness of the problems and national sentiment with the people over certain issues while acknowledging the importance of the Japan-U.S. alliance, Roos will be a great ambassador to Japan. We recommend that he visits the abduction sites and meet with the abductees' families as his predecessor did.

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. We hope Roos will demonstrate leadership in helping Japan-U.S. relations enter a new phase.

(2) Aso to order a lengthy extension of Diet session, focusing on "early August"

TOKYO SHIMBUN ONLINE

June 1, 2009, 1:28 PM

Prime Minister Taro Aso will instruct Secretary General Hiroyuki Hosoda of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to extend the current Diet session, which is due to recess on June 3, for a lengthy period. A plan to extend the session for about 60 days until early August is being considered in the ruling camp, with the aim of securing the passage of fiscal 2009 extra budget-related bills. But some coalition members say that extending the session until late July is enough.

Aso met secretly with New Komeito President Akihiro Ota at a Tokyo hotel last evening. They reportedly exchanged views on such questions as how long the ongoing Diet session should be extended and when the House of Representatives should be dissolved. The prime minister will make final decisions on these questions, based on the views exchanged there.

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The ruling camp will present its extension plan to the House of Representatives speaker and the House of Councillors president today. A vote on the plan will be taken in a Lower House plenary session tomorrow.

After a regular meeting between the government and the LDP in the Diet to be held this noon, Aso will call in Hosoda and other LDP executives to his office. Later, Hosoda will officially inform his counterpart of the New Komeito of the plan during their meeting, and lastly, Aso and Ota will confirm the plan in their official meeting.

Of the extra budget-related bills - now under deliberations in the Lower House, the ruling camp is aiming to enact four bills during the current Diet session. The four bills are now expected to clear the Lower House one after another by June 5.

Since an ordinary Diet session can be extended only once, the ruling camp, on the assumption of rejection by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) of the bills, is carrying out coordination, with a focus on the plan of extending the session until early August, when the bills are to be enacted into law with the override vote tactic under the so-called 60-day rule.

Some lawmakers, however, take the view that there is no need to extend the Diet session until August because the ruling coalition has agreed with the DPJ to revise the four bills and also because an override vote can be taken on July 12 in the Lower House on the tax revision bills linked to the supplementary budget, which have already been sent to the Upper House.

(3) MOFA bureaucrats manage secret accord on "introduction of nuclear arms" of 1960 Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, inform prime ministers selectively

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top play) (Full)
June 1, 2009

Four former vice ministers of foreign affairs told Kyodo News that the secret agreement on the "introduction of nuclear weapons" -- which provides for Japan's acquiescence in visits by U.S. ships and aircraft carrying nuclear arms -- concluded at the time of the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in 1960 has been managed over the years by the vice foreign minister and other top Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) bureaucrats. These bureaucrats decided at their own discretion to inform only certain prime ministers, such as Ryutaro Hashimoto and Keizo Obuchi, and foreign ministers.

The government has maintained that "such a secret agreement does not exist." This is the first time that former vice foreign ministers, who had actually been involved with the matter, have admitted that the secret agreement has been managed systematically, and that a number of prime ministers and foreign ministers had knowledge about it. This contradicts the explanation the government has given over the years, and it is likely to be forced to give an explanation of the truth.

According to these former vice foreign ministers, at the time the Security Treaty was revised, the U.S. side's interpretation was that the provision about the "introduction" of nuclear weapons requiring "prior consultation" between the two countries applied only to land-based deployment and not to those carried on ships or aircraft

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calling on Japanese ports and airports. The Kishi administration at that time also accepted that tacitly.

However, the Hayato Ikeda cabinet which came into power after the treaty revision stated at the Diet that port calls by ships carrying nuclear arms were also included in the provision on "introduction" of nuclear arms, which requires "prior consultation" under the treaty.

Then U.S. Ambassador to Japan Edwin Reischauer, who was concerned that the secret agreement might be abrogated, met Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ohira (who later became prime minister) in April 1963 to confirm that "visits by ships and aircraft carrying nuclear arms do not constitute 'introduction'." That was the first time Ohira learned about the secret agreement, and he consented. This was recorded in Japanese in a MOFA internal document which has been under the custody of MOFA's North American Affairs Bureau and International Treaties Bureau (now the International Legal Affairs Bureau).

A former vice minister who has seen the document said that, "At the time of the handover when I became vice minister, I heard from my predecessor that 'there is a (confidential) understanding between Japan and the U.S.' I also passed this on to the next vice minister. It was a big secret."

Another former vice minister said that only politicians trusted by MOFA, such as Hashimoto and Obuchi, were informed of the contents of the secret agreement. Yet another former vice minister stated that, "The bureaucrats decided (whether a prime minister or foreign minister should be told about the secret agreement)," revealing that the bureaucrats, and not the minister decided how to handle this state secret.

Since 1953, the U.S. Forces have deployed aircraft carriers and other vessels carrying tactical nuclear weapons in waters near Japan. After the end of the Cold War, these tactical nuclear arms deployed at sea were brought back to the U.S. mainland. U.S. official documents on the contents of this secret agreement had been made public in the late 1990s. (Kyodo)

(4) Gist of testimonies on secret agreement on "introduction of nuclear weapons"

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Full)
June 1, 2009

Following is the gist of the testimonies of four former vice ministers of foreign affairs (in the 1980s and 1990s) on the secret agreement between Japan and the United States on the introduction of nuclear weapons:

Mr. A

-- During the handover process when I became vice minister, my predecessor told me that "there is a (confidential) understanding between Japan and the U.S. on nuclear weapons," and I also passed this on to my successor. This was a big secret.

-- Japan and the U.S. have agreed since 1960 that nuclear arms carried on U.S. military vessels and aircraft are not subject to prior consultation. Therefore, the Japanese government has been

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lying to the people.

-- A memo (on the contents of the secret agreement) exists in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and I have read it. When Masayoshi Ohira was foreign minister, there was a secret document stating that the agreement was reconfirmed (between Japan and the U.S.), and I have also read this document.

-- The prime minister and foreign minister at that time were not informed, because if you tell politicians, the information tends to be leaked.

Mr B

-- I knew about the exchanges between Ohira and Reischauer. There is an internal document in MOFA about it. Of course, the incumbent vice ministers all knew about it.

-- Officially, this was a matter that needed to be reported to the incumbent prime minister and foreign minister. You could say it was audacious on our part, but since it was a matter of great importance, we were selective (about whether we could tell a certain prime minister about it or not).

Mr C

-- There is a document on the Japanese side (about the U.S. side's interpretation that nuclear arms carried on ships and airplanes are not subject to prior consultation). This is completely identical, word by word, (to the English "secret memorandum" on the contents of the secret agreement already made public in the U.S.).

--- Everybody in MOFA who is responsible for the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty knows (about the secret agreement). MOFA should still have the record (of Ohira and Reischauer's reconfirmation of the secret agreement).

Mr Keizo Obuchi was told about this when he was foreign minister, before he became prime minister. MOFA also told Mr Ryutaro Hashimoto. These two former prime ministers both knew the truth.

Mr D

-- I was told when I became the chief of the Treaty Bureau. I personally had not talked to the prime minister (about the secret agreement).

-- I was sort of embarrassed (by giving testimony that was contrary to the facts in the Diet repeatedly). (Kyodo)

(5) Mr. Hatoyama must not make an error in defense strategy

SANKEI (Page 1) (Abridged slightly)
May 31, 2009

Yukio Okamoto, foreign affairs commentator

The major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has made a fresh start under President Yukio Hatoyama. The rise in public support ratings for the party is so vigorous that even the advent of a Hatoyama administration seems possible.

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Mr. Hatoyama's policy centers on the buzzword "fraternity." In the Kojien dictionary, the word "fraternity" is defined as "a feeling of affection between brothers; affection toward friends." But the "promotion of fraternal diplomacy" does not seem appropriate in dealing with other countries. What concerns me is the government's year-end work to determine the new National Defense Program Guidelines and the Midterm Defense Buildup Program. The former determines the modalities of Japan's defense capabilities and the latter outlines the Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) five-year defense buildup program in concrete terms.

North Korea conducted its second nuclear test last week. North Korea's national strategy is extremely clear: ultimately possessing intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) capable of reaching the

continental United States. That would make it unnecessary for the United States to ensure the continuity of the (North Korean) regime. It would also give North Korea the upper hand in talks on the unification of the Korean Peninsula. In the meantime, Pyongyang would be able to earn foreign currency through exports of missile and nuclear technology. The North, therefore, is likely to repeatedly launch missiles and conduct missile tests. We should not think that if Japan deals with North Korea with a sense of fraternity, Pyongyang would abandon its nuclear weapons.

A clash with North Korea does not necessarily have to occur. The ultimate question is whether they will go so far as to wage a war against Japan by using missiles and possibly nuclear weapons. Chances for that are high as long as the Japan-U.S. security arrangements work as a deterrent. Japan, however, is certain to face a greater threat: China's marine strategy. In May 2008, the then commander of the U.S. Pacific Command testified before the Congress that a senior Chinese People's Liberation Army officer had made a proposal to divide up the Pacific Ocean in a way for the U.S. to take control of the sphere east of Hawaii and China of the area west of it. The proposal clearly reflects China's intention to advance into the Pacific Ocean. The Chinese Navy has in reality branched out into the Pacific Ocean beyond the First Island Chain connecting Kyushu, Okinawa, and Taiwan. China is also endeavoring to acquire a blocking capability to destroy the U.S. fleet in the oceanic area leading to the Second Island Chain connecting Yokosuka, the Bonin Islands, and Guam. Further, China will begin building an aircraft carrier shortly. China's submarine force is especially phenomenal. It has 62 submarines. Of them nine are nuclear-powered. Several submarines carry nuclear missiles. Japan, on the other hand, possesses only 16 diesel-type submarines.

In April, Japan deployed interceptor missiles as a precaution against possible debris of a Taepodong-2 missile. The step was natural for the SDF. But such is not a real threat to Japan. A real threat is when China proceeds with its powerful marine strategy in the Second Island Chain and grows into a power capable of controlling the security of waters near Japan in a decade or two from now. The Chinese military's main objective is to block the U.S. fleet from navigating toward Taiwan to assist it. The acquisition of such a capability by China means the Pacific Ocean around Japan being placed under the control of China.

Former DPJ president Ichiro Ozawa's Seventh Fleet comment and the DPJ's erroneous short-term security policy can be corrected later on. But it is not appropriate to formulate the new National Defense Program Guidelines and the Midterm Defense Buildup Program from a sense of fraternity. National interests could be damaged immensely.

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The time will come soon to determine the new National Defense Program Guidelines and the Midterm Defense Buildup Program.

Mr. Hatoyama should look ahead 20 years from now.

(6) U.S. military population in Okinawa an all-time low since reversion

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Abridged)
May 31, 2009

The population of U.S. military personnel stationed in Okinawa is an all-time low of 21,277 as of the end of September 2008, according to findings from the Okinawa prefectural government's annual survey conducted since the return of Okinawa to Japan in 1972. The figure shows a decrease of 1,443 over the same month a year ago. In the breakdown of U.S. troops in Okinawa, there are 12,402 from the Marine Corps, 5,909 from the Air Force, 1,682 from the Army, and 1,284 from the Navy.

These figures are based on findings from a hearing survey of U.S. forces in Okinawa. This survey was conducted by Okinawa Prefecture's Military Base Affairs Division, and the division revealed the data in its statistical report of March 2009, which was released May 29 regarding U.S. military bases and Self-Defense Forces bases in

Okinawa.

Both the Marine Corps and the Air Force have a decrease of about 800 over the corresponding month of the preceding year, posting an all-time low since Okinawa's reversion. The Army had 890 in 2006, 1,600 in 2007, and 1,682 in 2008. As seen from such data, the figure in 2008 doubled that in 2006. This is because in November 2006 the Army launched a 600-strong unit operating Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC) ground-to-air guided missiles.

The overall population of those connected to the U.S. forces in Okinawa, including civilian employees and families, is 40,416, a decrease of 8,074 over the corresponding month of the preceding year. Especially, the number of family members was 17,792, or 6,588 fewer than 24,380 in the corresponding month of the preceding year. Air Force family members were about 46 PERCENT fewer than in the preceding year.

The division also revealed the number of U.S. military personnel living off base. They numbered 7,847 at the end of March 2004. This off-base population was 8,830 at the end of March 2005 and 8,584 at the end of March 2006. According to statistics already announced for the following years, the population of off-base military personnel was 10,319 at the end of March 2007 and 11,810 at the end of March 2008. As seen from these figures, the number of off-base military personnel has increased from year to year.

(7) Japan, U.S. agree to build billet, other facilities for Futenma relocation

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Abridged)
May 31, 2009

The Japanese and U.S. governments agreed in a meeting of their joint committee yesterday to construct 10 buildings with a total space of about 16,550 square meters, including a billet for noncommissioned

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officers, on the premises of Camp Schwab along with the planned relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. The two governments have yet to decide on when to start construction. Contractors have already been selected, and construction work will be started within the year at the latest. Their contract is to complete construction work by February 2001. The cost of construction is estimated at approximately 3.5 billion yen.

The 10 buildings are all ferro-concrete. One of the 10 buildings is a five-storied billet for noncommissioned officers with a total floor space of about 11,000 square meters. A police office is also planned to be built. Its main building has two floors with a total floor space of about 1,900 square meters. In addition, the planned construction includes one-storied installations for power generation, bicycle parking, bus stop sheltering, and recycled container storage.

(8) DPJ's Asao refers to Futenma integration into Kadena

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)
May 31, 2009

Appearing on a TV Asahi news show aired yesterday, Keiichiro Asao, a House of Councillors member of the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) and the defense minister in the DPJ's shadow cabinet, referred to the possibility of integrating the heliport functions of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture into the U.S. Kadena Air Base in the prefecture as a solution to the issue of relocating Futenma airfield.

Integrating Futenma airfield into the Kadena base means Futenma airfield's relocation within Okinawa Prefecture. Asao is believed to be the first in his party to touch on this Kadena integration. When it comes to the issue of relocating Futenma airfield, the DPJ has so far shown its basic stance of relocating the airfield elsewhere outside Okinawa Prefecture. Accordingly, his remarks will likely be called into question in terms of consistency with his party's policy course. The DPJ will come up with its manifesto in the run-up to the forthcoming election for the House of Representatives, and its

response to the issue of Futenma relocation will draw attention.

"The key point of our Okinawa vision is not to build any more new bases in Okinawa Prefecture," Asao said. "If there's something I can imagine," he added, "we can think of integrating Futenma into Kadena and leaving Futenma for emergencies only." This was his answer to Takushoku University Professor Satoshi Morimoto's question asking how the DPJ would respond to the Futenma issue after taking the reins of government.

DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama, in his inaugural press remarks, stated: "Basically, we will relocate Futenma airfield elsewhere outside Okinawa Prefecture and we want to push for this."

DPJ to consider specific ways after taking office: Yamaoka

Regarding the issue of relocating Futenma airfield, DPJ Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka indicated yesterday that the DPJ would not step into any specific counterproposal in the next House of Representatives election. "We will consider specific ways right away after taking the reins of government," Yamaoka said. "Even if we try to push for this issue when we are not in office," he added, "we cannot even negotiate." Asked about Asao's Kadena integration remarks, Yamaoka said: "That is his personal view, not on the agenda

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of our party's discussions."

(9) Prime minister in quandary over environment and economy in setting mid-term goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Full)
June 1, 2009

Prime Minister Taro Aso will decide on Japan's mid-term (2013-2020) goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of this month. This is a good opportunity for Japan to make a public appeal on its stance of tackling the environmental issue. However, coordination of views is very difficult with motives of business circles, which are concerned over its impact on the economy, and those of the New Komeito, which attaches importance to environmental conservation, become entangled. It will be difficult to set such a goal because whether an ambitious goal is set or a low figure is adopted with the ongoing economic crisis in mind, one side or the other is bound to feel dissatisfied with it, according to a government source.

Prime minister puts on air of confidence

The prime minister during a telephone conversation with British Prime Minister Brown on the evening of May 28 said with confidence, "Although business leaders are objecting, I will release a mid-term goal that is decent as the world's top energy-saving country." He apparently indicated a desire to lead discussions at the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP15) to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009, which will focus on a mid-term goal.

The prime minister will enter near-final talks with related ministers on June 5. He will hold a press conference as early as the 10th to reveal Japan's mid-term goal.

Regarding a new framework to curb global warming (post-Kyoto Protocol), the long-term goal covers a period up to 2050 and the mid-term goal up to 2020. Former prime minister Yasuo Fukuda last year came up with a long-term goal to cut emissions by 60 PERCENT -80 PERCENT from the present level. Setting a mid-term goal was relegated to his successor Aso.

What the prime minister is thinking in his heart

The government at a meeting of the Round Table on the Global Warming Issue boiled down proposals for a mid-term goal into six ranging from a 4 PERCENT increase to a 25 PERCENT cut in comparison with the 1990 level.

If the sixth proposal with the largest margin of an emissions cut -

a 25 PERCENT cut is adopted, the real gross domestic product (GDP) would fall by between 3.2 PERCENT and 6.0 PERCENT. The unemployment rate is estimated to drop by between 1.3 PERCENT and 1.9 PERCENT from the 1990 level. The unemployment rate is estimated to worsen by between 1.3 points and 1.9 points from the 1990 level. The per-household burden is projected to increase by 330,000 yen in real terms.

Business circles are strongly alert to such proposals. The Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren) in joint names with leading labor unions announced in May a stance of supporting the first proposal with the most lenient emissions cut or a 4 PERCENT

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increase from the 1990 base year.

The prime minister, who considers economic recovery as his top priority, cannot afford to overlook the impact of a high numerical target on the domestic economy.

Referring to the mid-term goal, Aso in a speech made at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting (Davos Conference) in January underscored, "I would like to come up with a mid-term goal that is not a pledge without backing but something that is feasible and contributes to curbing global warming." A Kantei source spoke for the prime minister, noting, "The prime minister is concerned that measures to curb global warming will serve as a factor of limiting economic growth.

Three elements

For this reason, a move to settle for the third proposal or a 7 PERCENT cut, which is slightly above the figure in the Kyoto Protocol, has surfaced in the government.

However, if Japan comes up with that decision, it would be difficult for it to display leadership in international talks. Not only domestic environment conservation group but also the New Komeito, which is calling for adopting a 25 PERCENT cut from the 1990 level for a mid-term goal, will not remain quiet, since the Lower House election is close at hand.

Environment Minister Tetsuo Saito of the New Komeito lashed out at Nippon Keidanren's move, noting, "If Japan comes up with such a lenient goal, it would become a laughingstock of the world and its position in the international community would be injured." Party head Akihiro Ota said, "It is important to boil down figures a little more." However, persons around the prime minister are troubled by the New Komeito with one noting, "The New Komeito is stubborn."

It is difficult to find an answer to a question involving the environment, the economy and the New Komeito. A Round Table member said with a forced smile: "It is a very difficult decision to make. I am glad I am not the prime minister."

ZUMWALT